

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN TEMPLATE

County & Agency Name: Mendocino Health and Human Services Agency

Date Completed: November 21, 2008

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This template is intended to be used as a guide to help counties incorporate the 2006 federal disaster response criteria as part of local child welfare plans. Minors in the probation system must also be included in the plan. County plans must be amended to include Child Welfare Services (CWS) Disaster Response Plans and be operational by September 28, 2007.

In September 2006, Congress passed the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law (PL) 109-288). PL 109-288 amended Part B of Title IV of the Social Security Act to reauthorize the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Among other changes, PL 109-288 established requirements for states on disaster planning in child welfare under Section 6 (a) (16). Accordingly, counties are requested to address the following program areas in developing local disaster readiness plans.

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CWS Disaster Response Criteria A:	Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster:
Essential Function:	1. Identification and location process of children who may be displaced
Process Description:	Mendocino County's average number of children in foster care in fiscal year 2007/08 was two hundred fifty three (253), and the average number of children in family maintenance was one hundred sixty seven (167). Total social work staff number thirty four (34), and staff are familiar with their cases. Every month, a report is printed and distributed to all three CWS offices with the name of every child in foster care, foster parent/placement name, address, and phone number. In the event that computers were inaccessible or inoperable, this list is available. Also, the Department maintains a list of cell phone and land line contact numbers

	<p>for local FFAs and group homes.</p> <p>All children placed by probation will be identified and located by the J-LAN computer system located at the Probation Department. The lead probation placement worker will identify and locate these children, but any probation officer can access these records. If the computer system is inaccessible, the identifying and contact information can be found in the child's placement file located in the placement unit. The placement clerk also maintains a spreadsheet with all the placement information.</p>
Essential Function:	2. Communication process with child care providers
Process Description:	Mendocino County provides day care licensing services, including required renewals, county wide and maintains computer and hard copy based listing of current day care providers. In the event of an emergency, phone numbers and contact information are readily available by computer lookup or hard copy listing that are generated monthly and kept in the Ukiah CWS office.
Essential Function:	3. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event known in advance
Process Description:	<p>A CWS building evacuation plan is outlined in a written policy and procedure document for each of our three offices and staff participate in annual scheduled fire/emergency drills. The Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (OES) has evacuation plans in place for the County and would coordinate an evacuation.</p> <p>Probation currently has no foster care placements in the County but incarcerated youth at Juvenile Hall have the required evacuation plan posted at their facility and staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to assist. If a ward were to be placed in the County, the probation lead placement worker will contact the care provider and remove the ward to a safe location if needed. The probation lead placement worker would also contact out-of-county providers to determine if evacuation is needed. If care cannot be found for a ward outside of the disaster area, the ward can be housed at juvenile hall. As cited above, Juvenile Hall has established its own disaster/evacuations plans and any probation foster care wards that may be housed there will be subject to those procedures.</p>
Essential Function:	4. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event not known in advance

Process Description:	Same as number 3.
Essential Function:	5. Identification of shelters
Process Description:	County OES has developed a list of potential shelter facilities for the County. In addition, Social Services has a Disaster Response Team of volunteers from the agency who have been trained by the Red Cross and will work with the Red Cross on Emergency Shelter/Mass Care if needed.
Essential Function:	6. Parental notification procedures
Process Description:	<p>Social workers are responsible to look up on line or in hard copy files contact information for the parents of children on their caseloads.</p> <p>For probation wards, the lead placement officer will contact the parent or guardian of each placed child as soon as possible. Parental contact information is found in the computer or paper file, and is available at either the probation department or at juvenile hall. If the parent cannot be reached, the lead placement officer will advise collaborative law enforcement in the area where the parent lives. If law enforcement is not available, the local OES coordinator will be contacted.</p>
Essential Function:	7. Alternative processes for providing continued services
Process Description:	<p>In an emergency where staff are unable to report to work, HHSA SSB policies provide for a skeleton crew to provide immediate services. The skeleton crew consists of managers, supervisors, and other staff who are in fact able to reach one of the three regional offices. Those staff will provide necessary services as prioritized for each situation.</p> <p>Probation has established procedures to work with neighboring counties. Protocols are established for all placement officers and their colleagues in other counties where wards are placed, for emergency housing should the need arise.</p>
Essential Function:	8. Staff assignment process
Process Description:	CWS staff (see skeleton crew in item 7 above) are on notice that they are required to report to work in an emergency situation. Tasks will be assigned as needed.

	Probation's lead placement officer and supervisor may reassign work as needed. The placement supervisor, who does not carry a regular case load, may take on cases if needed.
Essential Function:	9. Workload planning
Process Description:	Managers and Supervisors would be in charge of dividing up workloads among members of their units. Workers could be reassigned as needed in an emergency where not all staff is able to be present. Supervisors could also perform social worker functions as needed.
Essential Function:	10. Alternative locations for operations
Process Description:	<p>Mendocino County CWS has three offices county wide and three affiliated Family Centers available to provide alternative operations, depending upon the nature and geographical scope of the emergency. All of these sites have CWS/CMS access and could be used in an emergency.</p> <p>The Probation Department can work out of the juvenile hall building if probation offices are unavailable. If Juvenile Hall was unavailable, Probation would work with neighboring counties to continue caring for wards. Adult Probation offices are located in a separate location and are available if necessary.</p>
Essential Function:	11. Orientation and ongoing training
Process Description:	Managers and supervisors are encouraged to attend any disaster preparedness training when presented by the County Office of Emergency Services. Additional staff members have been trained by Red Cross to perform emergency relief work of their own volition and would be available to assist. All county workers are emergency service workers in the event of a disaster.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria B:	Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases:
Essential Function:	1. New child welfare investigation process
Process Description:	If both CWS telephones and cell phones, along with staff's own personal cell phones, were disabled, staff would notify all local law enforcement agencies and coordinate with them to relay information to CWS emergency staff in coordination with OES staff to provide

	emergency services for children in need.
Essential Function:	2. Implementation process for providing new services
Process Description:	All Managers and Supervisors have sufficient experience, and social workers are specifically trained, for purposes of being on call and to perform emergency investigations if needed.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria C:	Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster:
Essential Function:	1. Communication structure – staff
Process Description:	Land line phones would be our first method, unless unavailable, supplemented by Departmental cell phones and staff's personal cell phones. If available, CWS/CMS email would also be a resource to maintain essential communication. If all these alternatives were not available, we would have to rely on OES communication resources and law enforcement until other communication methods became available. The Administrative Support Unit maintains a list of telephone numbers and addresses of all staff. In the event of a disaster, all staff will be contacted either by telephone or in person, by law enforcement, if necessary.
Essential Function:	2. Communication structure – child welfare personnel (phone tree)
Process Description:	Lines of communication are clearly delineated within the CWS organization. The Deputy Director will notify the five Senior Program Managers (SPM) he/she oversees. Each SPM would call the supervisors for whom they are directly responsible who would then call the staff under their supervision. In addition, each on call social worker is assigned a county cell phone and management and supervisors have contact information for all of them via their personal land line or cell phones.
Essential Function:	3. Communication structure – contracted services
Process Description:	CWS contracts with Tri-Cities Answering Service, county wide, which has the number of the on-call social workers at all times when the office is closed, as well as contact information for back up social workers and supervisory staff. Supervisory staff also have contact information for all SPM's and the Deputy Director, in case a need presents itself. CWS also contracts for emergency foster care with a local FFA and maintains contact information (land line, cell phone and e-mail) for the director and assistant director of the FFA. CWS social workers also

	<p>have contact information for FFA social workers. Staff have phone numbers for other local FFA's as well as county licensed foster homes.</p> <p>Juvenile Hall is open 24 hours 7 days a week and a current list of telephone numbers for all probation and placement are available at juvenile hall.</p>
Essential Function:	4. Communication process when all normal channels are unavailable
Process Description:	In such an event, we would have to rely on law enforcement and coordination with OES to maintain communication. Ham radios are available as well as a working Ham Radio network in Mendocino County. OES also has the ability to break into local radio broadcasts, and Probation Officers have field radios which use the law enforcement channel network.
Essential Function:	5. Communication frequency
Process Description:	Social workers contact clients regularly as required by law and would continue to do so by whatever means available in the event of a disaster or emergency.
Essential Function:	6. Communication with media
Process Description:	OES has designated a Public Information Officer from the County Executive Office.
Essential Function:	7. Communication with volunteers
Process Description:	Due to the confidentiality requirements of CWS, there are no volunteer workers. In a disaster situation that necessitated the use of volunteers, communication with them would be handled by the DSS Director or her designee.
Essential Function:	8. Establishment of a toll-free number prior to disaster (include TTY)
Process Description:	<p>Mendocino County has a toll free Centralized Intake number for child abuse and neglect reporting which is also available in case of any emergency. This number, 877-327-1799 (and 877-327-1677) relays to the answering service any time the office phones are not working as does the local helpline #707-463-HELP.</p> <p>TTY is made available in Mendocino County via the Telephone Relay Service which is located out of county, and presumably would be functional in a disaster affecting the County.</p>

CWS Disaster Response Criteria D:	Preserve essential program records:
Essential Function:	1. Record preservation process
Process Description:	In addition to saving all computer generated work in CWS/CMS, hard copies of documents are kept in the physical file. All documents filed in court are preserved also in the court files. Social Services is represented by County Counsel in all dependency hearings. County Counsel's office is located in the County Administration building and case files for court involved clients are also located in that office. A case's essential documents could be reconstructed as needed.
Essential Function:	2. Use of off-site back-up system
Process Description:	The CWS/CMS computers' data back-up is located in Sacramento and is done on a daily basis. There are also paper files located in the CWS office. The courthouse is located several blocks from CWS and houses all the court files.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria E:	Coordinate services and share information with other states:
Essential Function:	1. Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children reporting process
Process Description:	The supervisor of the Licensing Unit in the Ukiah office is the ICPC coordinator and would handle all communication regarding out of state placements.
Essential Function:	2. Mental health providers
Process Description:	Mental Health and Social Services both are branches of the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency and communicate via phone, e-mail, and in-person meetings on a regular basis.
Essential Function:	3. Courts
Process Description:	The courthouse is located approximately 1.5 miles from the Ukiah CWS office. Thus, even if telephone and e-mail were non-functional, in-person communication would be possible in most situations.

Essential Function:	4. Federal partners
Process Description:	We would use our local OES to maintain communication with Federal authorities in the event of a disaster.
Essential Function:	5. CDSS
Process Description:	Mendocino County's CWS representative in Sacramento is Carmen George. Mendocino HHSA Social Services Branch has an established line of communication, both by telephone and e-mail with our representative.
Essential Function:	6. Tribes
Process Description:	Of the 9 local tribes all of them either have their own ICWA representatives or they are represented by a representative from the Indian Child Preservation Program (ICFPP). Through regular quarterly "roundtable" meetings, HHSA Social Services Branch Children and Family Services Division has established relations with the ICWA reps and other tribal leaders and maintains contact information for all, and also with a tribal expert witness.
Essential Function:	7. Volunteers
Process Description:	There are currently no volunteers working with CWS. If an emergency situation required help from volunteers, communication with them would be handled by the HHSA Director or her designee, who could delegate responsibility to staff as needed.